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Mass

Mark Wisniewski

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Mass

by Mark Wisniewski

my grandmother kept violet
plants on

every window sill
tables the sun hit &
the floor along a north wall

she also had a parakeet she
outlived

& then

as she announced

it would be just
her

& her violets

she drank bottled grape
juice allowed to ferment
slightly
& attended the racetrack
once a year:

she had the whole moderation thing
down

except for
walking to 6 a.m.
mass

even in her eighties she
was a fiend about mass: thunderstorms
couldn't stop
her from accepting her
host

one morning
a neighbor appeared &
told my mother he'd just



seen someone lying face-down
in a snowbank

stopped his car
lifted up the person &

the person was
my grandmother

with 2 black eyes she blamed on
her glasses
& she was very sore

about missing Father

Lijewski's sermon

she lived to nearly
100 in a time
when that was all

but a miracle

my father found her

body one morning
on the landing
of her basement stairs

& then we were all

sure she'd woken
at night believing

the basement door led
outside to another

dark & quiet morning walk
from which she'd return

with her swallowed host

to her juice & all
those violets

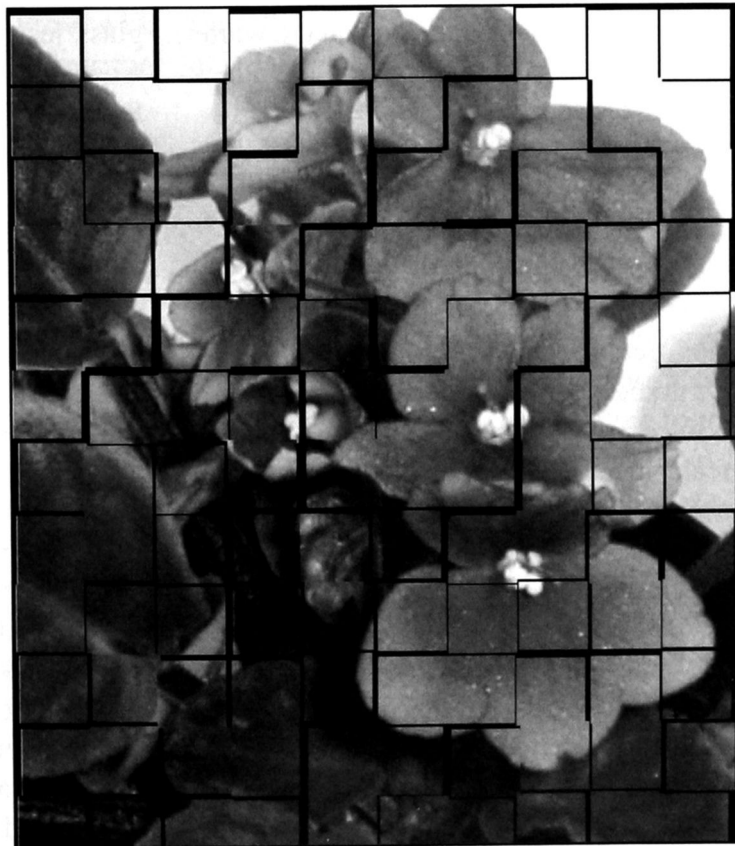


Photo (detail) by Joel Kendall

